

Overseas Voting FAQs

March 2014

In 2009, Congress passed the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act, making overseas voting easier than ever before. We encourage you to visit the redesigned Federal Voting Assistance Program website, fvap.gov, which has the forms and information you will need to vote from abroad in U.S. elections.

Our most important message: If you want to vote from abroad, you must send in a **Federal Post Card Application (FPCA)** to your local election officials every year – even if you have previously voted from overseas – and every time you change your name, physical address, or email address. Use the FPCA to request an absentee ballot and to register to vote if you are not currently registered. The easiest way to fill out this form is to use the Federal Voting Assistance Program's Online Voting Assistant, which will walk you through the process of requesting your absentee ballot and/or registering to vote. Most states now allow you to send the FPCA electronically to your local election officials, but others still require you to print and mail in a hard copy. The Online Voting Assistant will tell you which method(s) your state permits.

The fastest way to get your absentee ballot is to request electronic delivery. Depending on the specific rules of your home state, electronic delivery may be via fax, email, or online download. Remember to include your email address or fax number on your FPCA. Otherwise, your ballot will be mailed to you.

All states now offer a way to verify registration. This is often done by an online verification website or by calling your local election official. This helps confirm you are properly registered and on the list to receive absentee ballots. There is a link at fvap.gov to the available state voter registration verification websites.

Overseas voters are eligible to vote in all regular, primary, and special elections for federal offices (President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives). Some states allow overseas voters to vote in state and local elections depending on the voter's status.

States are required to send out ballots 45 days before a regular election for federal office (President, U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives) and states

generally send out ballots at least 30 days before primary elections. Returning your completed ballot as quickly as possible will ensure it reaches your local election officials before your state's ballot receipt deadline.

International mail from Uruguay to the United States generally takes 3-4 weeks. You can also drop off your FPCA or completed ballot in person at the Embassy, and we will mail it to the United States for you free of charge via our Diplomatic Post Office mail service. Mail sent through our mail service generally takes 7-10 days to reach its destination. For the mail service, use a printable postage-paid voting return envelope, or affix normal domestic U.S. postage.

After you send in your completed ballot, you can confirm receipt by your local elections officials online by visiting your state's election website.

If it is already within 30 days before Election Day and you have not yet received your ballot, fill out and mail in an emergency write-in ballot: the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot (FWAB). You can also drop off your FWAB in person at the embassy/consulate, and we will mail it to the United States for you via Diplomatic Pouch (see above).

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How soon can I send in my FPCA? Now?

A: We recommend sending in your FPCA on or soon after January 1st of each year and every time you change your name, mailing address, or email address.

Q: I plan to vote absentee from abroad in primary elections, but will be back in the United States for the November general elections. Do I have to do anything special?

A: When you fill out your FPCA, include a note to your local election officials that you will be returning to the United States on xxx date. Once you are back home, contact your local election officials to confirm your new U.S. address and your intention to vote in the United States.

Q: I am a U.S. citizen, but I have never lived in the United States. Can I vote?

A: Each state has its own residency requirements relating to voter eligibility. Thirty states and the District of Columbia allow voters who have never lived in the

United States to use their parents' state of voting residence. It is best to get in touch with local election officials in the place where your parents last lived, or the place where you have visited frequently, to find out if you are eligible to register to vote. The Embassy voting assistance officer can help you get in touch with local election officials.

Q: I have not lived in the United States for a long time, and cannot remember what our address was. Can I vote in any state? What do I do?

A: All voting in the United States is based on your residency. Normally, you would use the address where you last lived before leaving the United States, even if it was a very long time ago. Someone in your family may have old letters which contain an address. You can also check medical, church, school, or property records, or contact the Social Security Administration.

Q: What effect does voting have on my U.S. taxes?

A: U.S. citizens have an obligation to file federal tax returns wherever they live. Voting for candidates for federal offices does not affect your federal or state tax liability. Voting for candidates for state or local offices could affect your state tax liability. Consult legal counsel if you have questions about state income tax liability.